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SUBJECT: EU HOSTS INAUGURAL COMMITTEE OF CONTRIBUTORS
MEETING FOR EULEX KOSOVO

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11. (SBU) Summary: The EU hosted the first meeting of the third-state Committee of Contributors (CoC) for the EULEX Kosovo mission on May 26 in Brussels. EULEX Head of Mission Yves De Kermabon said that EULEX could be fully deployed by mid-September, but noted that contributing nations need to be flexible in adjusting to changes in timing and scope of the mission because of the lack of clarity on arrangements between UNMIK and EULEX. De Kermabon and Kees Klompenhouwer, Civilian Operations Commander, believe that the mandate of the mission, approved by the EU in February 2008, remains appropriate. Officials from other contributing non-EU countries Norway, Turkey, and Switzerland urged that the EU be transparent in mission planning and share operational documents with non-EU contributors. De Kermabon and many EU member state officials specifically welcomed U.S. participation in the mission, noting the credibility that American participation lends to EULEX. Echoing third-state calls for transparency, some member state representatives urged EU officials to ensure that the relevant operational information was provided to non-EU contributors. Klompenhouwer announced at the end of the meeting that EULEX classified documents would be provided to the third-state contributors. End Summary.

12. (U) USEU Charge d'Affaires represented the U.S. at the EU's inaugural meeting of the Committee of Contributors (CoC) for the EULEX Kosovo mission. The Committee, convened for each EU mission where non-EU members are participating, is the main forum for third-state contributors to receive information from the EU, provide input on the conduct of the mission, and provide recommendations on operational aspects of the mission. Ambassadors from the Norwegian, Swiss, and Turkish delegations to the EU also attended the meeting as third-state contributors. (Note: Croatian officials have expressed intent to contribute to EULEX, but have not yet confirmed their participation, and therefore were not included in the CoC meeting.) The EU was represented by Head of Mission Yves De Kermabon and Civilian Operations Commander Kees Klompenhouwer. Representatives from most of the EU member states also attended.

13. (SBU) Klompenhouwer opened the meeting by noting his expectations that the EU would soon finalize participation agreements with the United States and Switzerland. He explained that Turkey and Norway each already have "framework agreements" with the EU that will govern their participation.

He briefly outlined the mission, underscoring that EULEX is the EU's largest civilian crisis management operation to date. It will consist of 2,200 international staff and 1,200 local staff, working in three sectors including rule of law, multiethnic police and customs, and multiethnic justice. To date, 149 people have been selected from non-EU nations. The total budget is 205 million Euros. He also noted that the EU has been in on-the-ground discussions with NATO and KFOR regarding cooperation between the two missions.

¶4. (SBU) De Kermabon provided an update on the state of deployment, explaining that the Pristina-based EU planning team's mandate expires June 14, with EULEX to take over on June 15. Eighty-five percent of the personnel for the mission have been selected, and the second wave of deployment is complete, with a total of 220 international staff and 50 local staff currently on the ground. De Kermabon expects approximately 70 additional personnel to be deployed to Kosovo by mid-June. De Kermabon explained that the EU has had good cooperation with UNMIK on the ground and they have discussed a technical plan of transition between the two missions. Without UN agreement to move forward, however, the EU will be limited to these minimal numbers of deployed personnel. When an agreement is reached with the UN, the mission could absorb up to 100 personnel per week and the full mission could be deployed in 120-140 days, becoming fully operational by mid-September.

¶5. (SBU) De Kermabon urged all participating countries to be prepared to adjust to changes in the scope, timeline, and duration of the mission in order to adapt to the political and operational situation. In light of this changed timeline, he encouraged CoC members to maintain their

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contributions to the mission, as EULEX is experiencing an attrition rate of 8-10 percent. EU contacts have noted separately that the EULEX rate is only two or three percentage points higher than the average drop out rate for an ESDP mission. However, interlocutors admit that the attrition percentage is likely to increase with continued delays in deployment.

¶6. (SBU) De Kermabon emphasized that the mandate contained in the EU's February 2008 joint action authorizing the mission is still relevant to the circumstances in Kosovo and does not need to be changed. The EU is planning a unified mission across all of Kosovo, said De Kermabon, and there is a need to cultivate local ownership and responsibility among the Kosovars. Eighty percent of the EU's mandate is devoted to monitoring, mentoring, and advising local authorities while retaining some executive powers as necessary. De Kermabon described his intent to restore Kosovars' confidence in the rule of law, noting that the EU has launched an information campaign throughout 20 cities in Kosovo in order to publicize the mission and its functions.

¶7. (SBU) The Turkish, Norwegian, and Swiss Ambassadors -- all countries that have contributed to previous EU civilian missions -- each pushed for increased EU transparency in mission planning and more sharing of information. The Turkish and Swiss Ambassadors requested that the EU make available to third states all mission documents. The Charge said that the U.S. looks forward to the full deployment of EULEX and urged that the EU and UN clarify the necessary arrangements to enable the mission to move forward. Even without clear arrangements in place, the Charge asserted that the EU should be prepared to act. He also highlighted the importance of the CoC as a forum for transparent consultation.

¶8. (SBU) De Kermabon and many member state representatives, including those from the UK, France, the Netherlands, and Austria, specifically thanked the United States for its intended contribution, noting the credibility that U.S. participation lends to the mission. The UK representative

agreed with the Charge's assertion that the EU should be prepared to move forward with deployment even in the absence of clarity from the UN. In response to the other third-state interventions, the UK underscored the need to circulate relevant information and documents to non-EU contributors and urged that procedures governing information sharing be clarified if necessary. Germany agreed, noting that the non-EU contributions provided EULEX with enhanced legitimacy in the eyes of the Kosovars. Italy also voiced appreciation for the third-state contributions as did the European Commission representative. The Hungarian representative echoed arguments to circulate mission documents to the third states and highlighted the mission website as a valuable tool for EULEX mission personnel as they prepare to deploy to Kosovo.

19. (SBU) Klompenhouwer responded to the interventions by saying that the minutes of the meeting would reflect the calls for increased transparency on mission operations. He agreed to requests to make all the mission documents releasable to third states. Noting that the CoC is not a political committee, but rather one that exists to discuss mission management, he said that the Committee should hold regular monthly meetings or meet more often if necessary. However, UK and Swiss officials joined De Kermabon in commenting privately to the Charge that holding meetings once a month was probably too often. A more reasonable suggestion would be to meet every other month unless events warranted more frequent consultations.

MURRAY

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